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frequent rain. In sailing to Paraguay we were detained in that neighbourhood by a continuous calm, and remained stationary there for full three weeks, roasted by the heat of the sun, and daily washed with warm showers. Who can wonder that this languishing climate produces languid and weakly bodies, though strong robust people are found in other parts of Africa? From this you may know what to think of so extensive a region as America, and of its inhabitants. Its various provinces and even different parts of the provinces differ essentially in the properties of the air, food, and habitations, which produces a variety in the constitutions of the inhabitants, some being weak, some very strong.

Let others write of the other Americans to whom and what they choose: I shall not contradict them. Of the Paraguayrians I confidently affirm that the equestrian nations greatly excel the pedestrians in beauty of form, loftiness of stature, strength, health, and longevity. 142 The bodies of the Abipones are muscular, robust, agile, and extremely tolerant of the inclemencies of the sky. You scarcely ever see a fat or pot-bellied person amongst them. Daily exercise [526] in riding, hunting, and in sportive and serious contests prevents them almost always from growing fat, for like apes they are always in 164 motion. They consequently enjoy such an

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868 water, that it may learn to swim while it is but
856 just beginning to walk. You seldom see little
857 boys but just weaned walking in the street with-
out a bow and arrow. They shoot birds, flies,
● [526] and all kinds of small animals. Their usual
amusement is shooting at a mark. They go out
every day on horseback, and ride races with one
another. All these things undoubtedly conduce
much towards strengthening and enlarging the
ooo body. Would that European mothers could be
brought to discard the unnatural artifices and in-
dulgences used in the bringing up of their chil-
dren! Oh that they would moderate the ban-
dages and cloths with which they bind, and as
it were imprison and enchain the tender little
bodies of their infants! then should we see fewer
bandy-legged, hump-backed, dwarfish, weak,
and diseased persons in Europe.

291 The Abipones wear a garment not tight to
their bodies, but loose and flowing down to their
heels; calculated to cover, not load and oppress
the body, and to defend it from the injuries of
the weather, without preventing the perspira-
tion, or impeding the circulation of the blood.
ooo All the wise people of the east, and most of the
ancient Germans, made choice of a large wide
garment. What if we say that their bodies
were consequently larger, and filled a wider
space? Those who wish to enjoy their health,

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512 saddles, practise every thing, in short, fatiguing to
526 the hands or feet. But if they indulge themselves with an intermission of these employments, they ride horseraces for a sword which is given to him who reaches the goal first. Another very common game amongst the Abipones is one which they play on foot. The instrument with which it is performed is a piece of wood about two hands long, rounded like a staff, thicker at the extremities and slenderer in the middle. This piece of wood they throw to the mark, with a great effort, in such a manner that it strikes the ground every now and then, and rebounds, like the stones which boys throw along the surface of a river. Fifty and often a hundred men stand in a row and throw this piece of wood by turns, and he who flings it the farthest and the straightest obtains the sword.

This game, which from boys they are accustomed to play at for hours together, amuses and fatigues them with wonderful benefit to their
[411] health. The same piece of wood which serves both as an instrument of peace and war, is made formidable use of by many of the savages to crush the bodies of their enemies and of wild
[181] beasts. The Abipones hate to lead the life of
147 a snail, idle and listless, and consequently do
512 not undergo a swift and miserable decay, like those who are stupefied with sloth, confined to

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of apron made of the longer ostrich feathers. That woman has every day the most business to perform; for in company with the other girls, she visits all the huts, and with a hide, twisted in the form of Hercules's club, whips, puts to flight, and pursues all the men that she finds in every house, and those that are met by the way are soundly beaten by the girls, with the palm boughs. The first day is passed in this running up and down, amidst the laughter of the flagellated men. Next day the girls, who are distributed into bands, wrestle with one another, and the boys do the same in a separate place. On the third day they are called out to dance, the boys on one side, and the girls on the other. They all join hands till a circle is formed, an old woman, the directress of the dance going round striking a gourd: and when after a whirling for some time, they grow giddy, they rest at intervals, and then renew their dancing, which contains nothing worthy of admiration, but the patience displayed on the part both of the spectators and of the performers, and is perfectly devoid of art. On the fourth day, the woman with the apron of ostrich feathers traverses the town, surrounded by girls, challenging the stoutest and strongest woman she finds in every house, to contend with her in the street; and now throwing her adversary, now being herself thrown, affords an amusing spectacle to the assembled people.

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of going to a greater distance, and striking with more force. It is certain that the Abipones are very skilful archers: they are accustomed to the bow from children, and even in infancy can shoot little birds on the wing. In sportive contests, when a reward was proposed to each of the winners, a citron placed at a considerable distance served for a mark. Considering the number of archers, very few missed their aim, to the astonishment of the Spaniards who witnessed such dexterity. The Guaranies are also reckoned very expert in this art.

The Abipones have a great variety of arrows. Some are longer and thicker, as being intended to kill larger beasts. The form of the points is also various. Some are plain and have a straight point; some are barbed either on one or both sides, and others armed with a double row of barbs. You can never extract an arrow of this kind from the flesh, unless you turn it about with both hands, by which means you will open a way to extricate the barbs, but with what pain! When the Abipones see the remains of an arrow occupying any fleshy part of the body, as the thigh, or arm, they cut out the piece of flesh with the inherent particle themselves. The Cacique Ychoalay, in a sharp contest with his rival Oaherkaikin, was dangerously wounded with a bone arrow, which stuck in the back